

# Montana GED

## Test Contents

### 2002 Series GED Tests

What do people want to know about the 2002 Series GED Tests? The essentials can be boiled down to two questions: “What remains the same?” and “What is different?” GED Test Development staff members have developed some answers to these questions for each of the five tests in the GED battery.

#### What remains the same?

The Tests of General Educational Development (GED Tests) will continue to measure the outcomes of a four-year program of secondary school education in the United States and Canada, using the most up-to-date, widely used secondary school curriculum standards and standardized assessment practices available.

As with previous series of the GED Tests, the 2002 Series GED Tests will cover the core academic areas of language arts, social studies, science and mathematics. GED candidates will continue to compose a timed essay on an assigned topic as part of the Language Arts, Writing Test.

Developed by committees of professional educators and test specialists in each subject area, the GED Tests are administered to graduating high school seniors to establish the passing standard. Individual states, provinces, and territories may set a passing standard higher than, but not lower than, the mark established by the GED Testing Service.

The 2002 Series GED Tests will continue to follow their original purpose of providing a basis for conferring a high school credential on adults who have not graduated from traditional high school.

#### What is different?

- GED candidates will encounter more business-related and adult-context information texts across all five tests.
- The tests will reflect the impact of welfare-to-work legislation and the increased emphasis on academic standards in the K-12 community.
- The 2002 Series GED Language Arts, Writing Test will carry an increased emphasis on organization and will implement a new scoring scale for Part II, the timed essay portion.
- The 2002 Series GED Mathematics Test will have two booklets: Part I permits the use of a calculator, Part II does not. Candidates must complete both parts of the test to earn a score. All GED candidates will use the Casio fx-260 Solar calculator during testing. Candidates will have an opportunity to practice using the calculator before testing begins.
- On the 2002 Series GED Social Studies Test, U.S. GED candidates can count on seeing at least one excerpt from the **U.S. Declaration of Independence**, the **U.S. Constitution**, or a landmark Supreme Court decision.

- Candidates will continue to read and interpret fiction and nonfiction, prose, poetry, and drama from a variety of cultures and time periods on the 2002 Series GED Language Arts, Reading Test. However, nonfiction will include business-related documents.

The 2002 Series GED Science Test, using the National Science Education Standards framework, will ask candidates to select the best way to set up an experiment, interpret others' results, analyze experimental flaws, apply scientific conclusions to their personal lives, and use the work of renowned scientists to explain everyday global scientific issues.

## **What's New?**

### **Language Arts, Writing**

#### **What Remains the same?**

For the essay, candidates will still be asked to develop an essay in 45 minutes on an expository topic. The three item types (correction, revision, and construction shift) will remain the same. Information documents (previously referred to as "passages") that were included on the previous test series will continue to be tested. The test will continue to have two parts-Part I, the multiple-choice section, and Part II, the essay section-and will continue to be reported as a single score. A candidate must complete both parts of the GED Language Arts, Writing Test to receive a score. If a candidate doesn't successfully complete both parts of the GED Language Arts, Writing Test, he or she will have to take both parts again.

#### **What Is No Longer Being Tested?**

Spelling is no longer tested except for homonyms, possessives, and contractions. Commas are only tested when they are used to eliminate confusion.

#### **What Are the New Additions?**

The current GED Writing Skills Test will become the GED Language Arts, Writing Test. In addition to the informational documents, the test will also include:

1. Business communications – documents that are part of the business environment. These documents will have 200 to 300 words (12 to 18 sentences) and will involve letters, memos, meetings notes, e-mail, reports executive summaries, applications, or similar correspondence.

"How to" texts – documents that provide instructions or directions. These documents will have 200 to 300 words (12 to 18 sentences) and will focus on topics such as securing a job, writing a resume, dressing for success, leasing a car, planning a trip, and so forth.

In addition to the three present content areas (sentence structure, usage, and mechanics) being tested, a fourth will be included – organization. Organization involves transition within paragraphs, creating effective text divisions, topic sentences and unity/coherence.

Although candidates will continue to write an essay on an expository topic, candidates may need to expand their essays to 250 words in order to complete a focused, developed essay. The

instructions for writing the essay will change to include directions asking the candidate to draw upon his or her personal observations, knowledge and experience when composing the essay.

### **What's New?**

#### **Language Arts, Reading**

### **What Remains the Same?**

The passages on the new 2002 Series GED Language Arts, Reading Test will continue to reflect diversity in perspective (for example, gender, ethnicity, age, and region). The passages will continue to range from 300 to 400 words. There will be one poem (8 to 25 lines) and one piece of drama on every test form.

### **What Is No Longer Being Tested?**

The content areas in the 1988-test series labeled Popular Text (1950 – present) and Classical Literature (pre-1950) are no longer displayed as content areas but are defined as time periods. These time periods have been expanded to three: Pre-1920, 1920-1960 and 1960-present, with passages distributed across the time periods. Similarly, Commentary on the Arts as a content area is now integrated into Nonfiction Prose. The distinction in comprehension questions between inferential and literal has been revised. The questions currently labeled “literal comprehension” questions are renamed “comprehension.” Inferential comprehension questions are, for the most part, defined as synthesis questions.

### **What Are the New Additions?**

The GED Interpreting Literature and the Arts Test will become the GED Language Arts, Reading Test. The Writing and Reading Tests will be preceded by “Language Arts” to indicate that the two tests belong to the same academic subject and are interrelated. As noted above, the classification of the content areas was changed from time periods to content areas as defined by the type of text: Literary (75 percent) and Nonfiction (25 percent).

One of the Literary Text passages will include at least one comparison/contrast question. This question will be written to include text that can be compared/contrasted with the original passage. One of the Nonfiction passages will be a business-related document such as an excerpt from an employee handbook or training manual. Viewing will be addressed in a textual manner.

One of the Nonfiction Prose passages will use a selection drawn from articles, editorials and so forth about visual representation. However, there will not be graphics on this test.

Besides redefining comprehension, the percentage allocations for the cognitive levels using Bloom’s taxonomy are as follows: 20 percent comprehension, 15 percent application, 30-35 percent analysis, and 30-35 percent synthesis.

### **What's New?**

#### **Mathematics**

### **What Remains the Same?**

Measurement, Algebra, Geometry, Number Relations, and Data Analysis will still be tested on the 2002 Series GED Mathematics Tests; however, the emphasis on these areas will differ from that of the 1988 Test Series, with more emphasis on Data Analysis and Statistics. The GED Mathematics Test will continue to include 25 percent set-up questions. These are questions that do not require the candidate to calculate the response but rather to identify the correct way to solve a problem.

### **What Is No Longer Being Tested?**

Although it is important to recognize when there is not sufficient information to solve a problem, the emphasis on this type of question will decrease from 12 percent to 4 percent for the 2002 Series GED Tests.

### **What Are The New Additions?**

Beginning in 2002, the GED Mathematics Test will be presented in two booklets: Part I permits the use of a calculator; Part II does not. Each part of the test will be equally weighted. Therefore, a candidate must complete both parts of the test to receive a score. If a candidate doesn't successfully complete both parts of the test, he or she will have to take both parts again. A scientific calculator will be provided to the candidate for use on Part I. There will be several sample questions prior to the actual test administration to permit the candidate to practice with the calculator.

By permitting calculator use, the GED Testing Service has opened the door to increase realism in the type of mathematics problems, to multi-step problems, and to technology that is more common in the workplace. Approximately 20 percent of the items are alternate format (not multiple-choice). Alternate format items are included on both parts of the test. Item sets (several items corresponding to one graphic or other stimuli) will play an increasingly important role. Multiple pieces of information are effectively communicated through graphics such as pie charts, bar graphs, and tables. The GED Mathematics Test will include many questions that require the candidate to access information from single sources such as these.

## **What's New Science**

### **What Remains the Same?**

The questions on the GED Science Test will continue to be administered in a multiple-choice format.

### **What Is No Longer Being Tested?**

The 2002 Series GED Science Test has been revised in several major areas but will not eliminate subject matter covered in the 1988 series.

## **What Are The New Additions?**

One dimension of the 2002 Series GED Science Test incorporates the National Science Education Content (NSEC) Standards of physical science, life science, and earth and space science (NRC). The content area of earth science has been expanded to include space science due to an increased focus on space science in grades 9-12. The test will group physics and chemistry into the content area of physical sciences in accordance with the NSEC Standards approach to these subjects.

A second dimension of the 2002 Series GED Science Test includes the NSEC Standards of Unifying Concepts and Processes, Science as Inquiry, Science and Technology, Science in Personal and Social Perspectives, and History and Nature of Science. The areas of comprehension, application, analysis, and evaluation used in the 1988 series of the GED Tests have been integrated with the NSEC Standards. The 2002 Series GED Science Test will contain an increased focus in environmental and health topics (for example, recycling, heredity, prevention of disease, pollution, and climate), and an increased emphasis on science relevant to everyday life.

The 2002 Series GED Science Test will increase the number of single questions and decrease the number of passage sets, permitting a wider coverage of science topics. Half (50 percent) of the new GED Science Test will be conceptual understanding questions; the remaining 50 percent will be problem-solving questions. Test questions with graphic content will increase from 30 percent to 50 percent.

## **What's New? Social Studies**

### **What Remains the Same?**

The 2002 Series GED Social Studies Test will continue to use a multiple-choice format. The test will measure concepts and skills from the academic high school subject areas of history, geography, civics and government, and economics within contexts familiar to and relevant to adults. The test will measure four of the general critical thinking skills: comprehension, application, analysis, and evaluation. The test contexts will continue to sample from national and global contexts. The test source materials will continue to consist of primary and secondary sources:

1. Prose-only (articles, speeches, textbooks, letters, laws and so forth).
2. Visual-only (maps, graphs, charts, tables, diagrams, cartoons), o
3. Combined (source materials containing both prose and graphics).
4. The questions continue to be arranged in sets or as single questions.

## **What Is No Longer Being Tested?**

The behavioral sciences (psychology, sociology, and anthropology) will no longer be tested as a separate content area on the GED Social Studies Test. The understanding and use of some major concepts previously measured in this content area will be tested within the context of other social studies content areas (law, culture, race, status, civic participation, social participation, religion, interdependence and so forth). However, the understanding and use of concepts related to human health and development will not be measured.

### **What Are The New Additions?**

The 2002 Series GED Social Studies Test will contain an increase in the percentage of history questions, with more clearly defined content in world history. It will have a more clearly defined content sampling from the eras in U.S. and world history. The test will contain a greater percentage of civics and government questions. The test will have a more clearly defined content sampling from major sub-content or subtopics on the geography, civics and government, and economics content outlines. The test will measure an understanding of a combination of concepts from different social studies content areas within the same question set.

The test will have a greater percentage of questions that test the critical thinking skill of analysis. Also, the application questions will be more narrowly defined: the task must take place in a new context, different from the context provided in the question's source material. The test will include a greater percentage of questions based on graphic or visual source materials. The test will include questions that test visual processing skills with source material that is graphic or visual. The test will include photographs as source materials.

A greater percentage of questions on the 2002 Series GED Social Studies Test will be in the single-item format. The test will include at least one "practical" document such as a voters' guide, tax forms, budget tools, surveys and so forth. The test will include at least one excerpt or adaptation from the **U.S. Declaration of Independence**, the **U.S. Consitution** and landmark Supreme Court cases.